

# South Dakota National Guard

## Public Affairs Office

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Watertown Readiness Center renamed in honor of general**

By Sgt. Mark VanGerpen – 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade

WATERTOWN, S.D. – The South Dakota Army National Guard officially rechristened the Watertown Readiness Center, Sunday, Oct. 2.

The facility's new name is the Brig. Gen. Ernie Edwards Readiness Center, so named for the 81-year-old Watertown man who has been an educator and mentor in the community for years, and who served nearly four decades in the SDARNG.

Edwards served as the 17th assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG and retired with over 37 years of service. He spent more than 39 years as an educator in South Dakota and served the majority of his career as a math teacher, coach, principal and superintendent in Watertown.

"Having this beautiful facility named in ones' honor creates a lasting tribute, and I honestly cannot think of a more deserving individual on which to bestow this honor," said U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the SDNG.

Edwards attended the renaming ceremony Sunday alongside family and colleagues who described him as a capable, genuine leader whose positive attitude inspired countless others throughout the years.

"I feel very humble for this great honor," Edwards said. "Being a member of the South Dakota Army National Guard has been a privilege. I have such great memories and have formed so many wonderful friendships during the 37 years I served. All I can say to the Soldiers, students and community members I have served with all these years is: continue to march."

Retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Donald Goldhorn, former adjutant general of the Guam National Guard, former assistant adjutant general of the SDARNG and educator in Watertown, described Edwards as "the best of the best" when it came to leadership.

"Working for Ernie when he was the superintendent of the Watertown School District while I worked at the high school was an educator's dream," Goldhorn said. "His positive and caring attitude toward students, teachers and staff was infectious and created a school climate which probably cannot be equaled."

Also in attendance was South Dakota Lt. Gov. Matt Michels, who thanked Edwards for his service and noted how rare it is for a building in South Dakota to be named in ones' honor.

"We don't name buildings in the state of South Dakota very often," Michels said. "I think the reason is that it is for the greater good ... that we should be remembered by our deeds and not by our names.

"We are a product of people like (Edwards) who came before us. (Edwards) gave everybody a chance, and hopefully 50 years from now when people walk through here, they will be captivated by his example that we are called to serve others."

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Edwards first enlisted in the SDARNG in 1957 and served as an artillery officer for most of his career until his retirement in 1994. He held nearly every key command and staff leadership position including service as a battery, battalion and brigade commander within the 147th Field Artillery.

Even after his retirement, Edwards was a prominent figure within the Watertown community and served on many state and local civic organization boards that support military and veterans affairs and invest in the future of today's youth.

Edwards was also instrumental in the planning, development and implementation of the Watertown Readiness Center, which opened in the summer of 2013.

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High resolution photos are available at [www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard](http://www.flickr.com/photos/southdakotationalguard)



**161002-Z-LN227-122:** South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers unveil the sign outside the newly renamed Brigadier General Ernie Edwards Readiness Center at a renaming ceremony Oct. 2, 2016, in Watertown, S.D. The former Watertown Readiness Center was renamed for Edwards in honor of his years of dedicated service to the SDARNG and the Watertown community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen)



**161002-Z-LN227-041:** Retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Ernie Edwards, right, talks with South Dakota Lt. Gov. Matt Michels prior to a facility renaming ceremony Oct. 2, 2016, in Watertown, S.D. The South Dakota Army National Guard renamed the Watertown Readiness Center the Brigadier General Ernie Edwards Readiness Center in honor of Edwards' years of dedicated service to the SDARNG and the Watertown community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen)



**161002-Z-LN227-093:** Retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Ernie Edwards and his wife, LuAnn, attend a South Dakota Army National Guard renaming ceremony for the Watertown Readiness Center Oct. 2, 2016, in Watertown, S.D. The facility was renamed the Brigadier General Ernie Edwards Readiness Center in honor of Edwards' years of dedicated service to the SDARNG and the Watertown community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen)



**161002-Z-LN227-070:** U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, adjutant general of the South Dakota National Guard, addresses the crowd at a facility renaming ceremony Oct. 2, 2016, in Watertown, S.D. The SDARNG renamed the Watertown Readiness Center the Brigadier General Ernie Edwards Readiness Center in honor of Edwards' years of dedicated service to the SDARNG and the Watertown Community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen)



**161002-Z-LN227-078:** Retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Donald Goldhorn, former adjutant general of the Guam National Guard and former assistant adjutant general of the South Dakota Army National Guard, addresses the crowd at a facility renaming ceremony Oct. 2, 2016, in Watertown, S.D. The SDARNG renamed the Watertown Readiness Center the Brigadier General Ernie Edwards Readiness Center in honor of Edwards' years of dedicated service to the SDARNG and the Watertown Community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen)



**161002-Z-LN227-152:** Retired U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Ernie Edwards views a memorabilia display case in his honor during the South Dakota Army National Guard renaming ceremony for the Watertown Readiness Center Oct. 2, 2016, in Watertown, S.D. The facility was renamed the Brigadier General Ernie Edwards Readiness Center in honor of Edwards' years of dedicated service to the SDARNG and the Watertown community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen)



**161002-Z-LN227-061:** The South Dakota Army National Guard hosted a renaming ceremony for the Watertown Readiness Center Oct. 2, 2016, in Watertown, S.D. The facility was renamed the Brigadier General Ernie Edwards Readiness Center in honor of Edwards' years of dedicated service to the SDARNG and the Watertown community. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Mark VanGerpen)



**Brig. Gen. Ernie Edwards.** (U.S. Army National Guard file photo)

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